
Neighbors App and Law Enforcement Portal

353.1 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The department recognizes that robust crime prevention efforts in partnership with the community are essential to the reduction of crime in our community. The purpose of this policy is to set forth the guidelines for operations related to the Neighbors smartphone App and Law Enforcement Portal.

353.2 DEFINITIONS

- **Neighbors App** - A smartphone application which allows members of the community to participate in a digital neighborhood watch and share and comment on videos, photos and text posts related to crime and safety. Users may post videos and photos from any source. The Neighbors app does not promote the purchase of any product or endorse any specific vendor.
- **Neighbors** - Users of the Neighbors App.
- **Neighbors Feed** - A chronological list of crime and safety related posts shared by neighbors and available through the Law Enforcement Portal.
- **Law Enforcement Portal** - A cloud based application available only to law enforcement that allows agency members to:
 - Collaborate with Neighbors by creating locally specific crime and safety-related alerts of interest to app users,
 - View and comment on Neighbor posts, request additional information and provide follow-up to their concerns.
 - Request videos from Neighbors when a crime or safety event occurs.
- **Alert Zones** - Specific areas (such as squad areas, beats and patrol zones) within which an alert to specific agency members can be generated when a Neighbor shares a post.
- **Video Request** - The process of requesting video from Neighbors through the Law Enforcement Portal.
- **Neighbors Coordinator** - The Primary Point of Contact for the Neighbors App and Law Enforcement Portal who will coordinate all Department operations, access and use of these tools.

353.3 ACCESS AND USE

Access to and use of the Law Enforcement Portal will be strictly controlled. Only those members authorized by the Chief of Police or designee shall access the Law Enforcement Portal using the credentials provided to them. Members shall not use another member's credentials to access the Portal.

All use of the Portal shall be for legitimate law enforcement purposes only. Use of video or photos obtained from the publicly shared Neighbors Feed shall be downloaded and shared only for

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legitimate investigatory or intelligence gathering purposes. All media obtained shall be stored and archived in compliance with Department record retention and evidence retention policies.

Unless specifically authorized by the Chief of Police or designee, members shall access the Law Enforcement Portal only from Department computers and devices and shall not access the Law Enforcement Portal during non-duty hours.

Use of the Portal to assist another agency in their investigation is generally discouraged and shall be done only with the approval of the Neighbors Coordinator. Agencies requesting access to or information from the Portal should be referred to the vendor.

353.4 NEIGHBORS COORDINATOR

The Neighbors Coordinator will:

- Determine appropriate access levels for Department members based on their operational need and in the best interests of the Department.
- Develop an implement a system through which monitoring of the Neighbors Feed and interaction with Neighbors through the Portal occurs on a regular basis.
- Insure members are appropriately trained to their level of access.
- Periodically audit the use Portal to insure compliance with this policy.
- Monitor program success, report ot the command staff and implement changes when appropriate.

353.5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is essential to the success of this digital neighborhood watch. As such, participation shall be a focus area for community crime prevention efforts. The Department may produce flyers and other literature promoting the use of the app. Crime Prevention Officers may provide information on the program during community meetings and events.

The Social media Coordinator shall be the primary point of contact for alerts and comments to the Neighbors Feed. All supervisory personnel shall have the ability to post alerts and comment on Neighbor posts in the Neighbors Feed. Other agency members may be authorized to comment on Neighbors Feed content based on operational needs.

Members who are authorized to comment on Neighbors Feed content are encouraged to do so regularly.

353.6 GENERAL OPERATIONS

The Department recognizes the value of the critical crime and safety information shared by Neighbors in the Neighbors Feed. Patrol personnel are encouraged to monitor the feed daily for information indicating criminal activity, and the identification of common or known suspects.

- Specific agency members may be designated to receive alerts when a Neighbor posts in a specific, relevant area.

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- Supervisors may share the Neighbors Feed at roll call to alert members to crime and safety events and identify suspects.
- Members may access the Portal from their MDC in compliance with the mobile computing policy.
- Members who observe obvious criminal activity in a Neighbor post shall check the comment section to determine if the agency is aware of the incident. If it appears the agency is unaware, the member shall alert their supervisor.

353.7 INVESTIGATIVE OPERATIONS

The Law Enforcement Portal allows investigators to request videos from device owners within a specified area. All Video Requests shall adhere to these strict guidelines.

When an investigator determines a Video Request is appropriate for a given case, they shall seek approval from the CIB Supervisor. If the CIB Supervisor is unavailable and the request is urgent, any supervisory member may authorize the video request. The supervisor authorizing the request shall notify the CIB Supervisor of the authorization by email as soon as practicable.

- Investigators should attempt to narrow the scope of the video request to an appropriate time period and duration to avoid an overly broad request.
- Investigators should remain aware that device locations are offset to protect owner privacy and adjust the area of the request accordingly.
- In cases involving serious crimes, investigators will not use the Video Request feature as a substitute for neighborhood canvas.

Video Requests shall be coordinated with the Social Media Coordinator and/or the Neighbors Coordinator to ensure that a neighborhood alert is sent in conjunction with the Video Request.

353.8 EVIDENTIARY CONSIDERATIONS

All media obtained from the Neighbors Feed or through a Video Request shall be preserved and maintained in accordance with established record retention and evidence storage policies.

Media obtained through a Video Request remains in the case management area of the Portal and is stored in the cloud indefinitely. Investigators or analysts who view a video and make the determination that it is of evidentiary value shall download the video, begin the chain of custody and preserve it according to our evidence storage policy.